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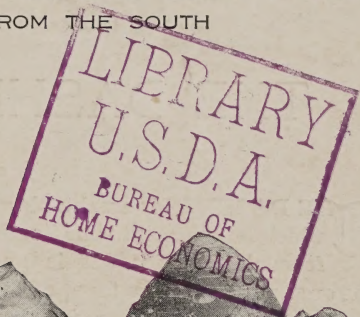
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# The Dasheen

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A NEW VEGETABLE OF GREAT VALUE  
FROM THE SOUTH



AN ELEVEN-POUND HILL OF DASHEENS.

*The tops, roots, and soil have been removed. Note the two large central corms and the numerous attached cormels, or tubers. Dasheen corms are usually more mealy than the tubers, though in general character there is little difference. The flavor is suggestive of chestnuts.*

# THE DASHEEN

THE DASHEEN is a valuable starchy vegetable which has come into our Southern horticulture from the Tropics. It is an especially fine-flavored variety of the taro, a staple food crop of the Orient. It is similar in composition to the white potato, though it is firmer and contains about half as much again of protein and of starch. Dasheens properly grown have, when baked or boiled, something of the dryness, mealiness, and flavor of the chestnut. They are prepared, in general, like potatoes, and are cooked in the same length of time or a little less. When cooked they not infrequently are of a grayish or violet color, which characteristic is often associated with the highest quality.

In appearance the dasheen plant strongly resembles the ordinary elephant-ear, or caladium, of the garden, and is, in fact, closely related to it although of a different botanical species. The edible part of the plant consists of one or more large underground corms and a number of cormels, or "tubers," of much smaller size. The corms are

usually somewhat more mealy than the tubers when cooked, though in general the quality is much the same.

There are large areas in the South Atlantic and Gulf regions of the United States in which the dasheen can be grown more successfully than other food crops, but a demand for this exceptionally valuable vegetable must be created in order to encourage its commercial cultivation. Those who can not grow dasheens can materially assist in creating this demand and in establishing a new industry in the South by purchasing and using them when they are to be obtained on the market.



A FOUR-ACRE FIELD OF DASHEENS IN CENTRAL FLORIDA SHORTLY BEFORE HARVEST TIME.

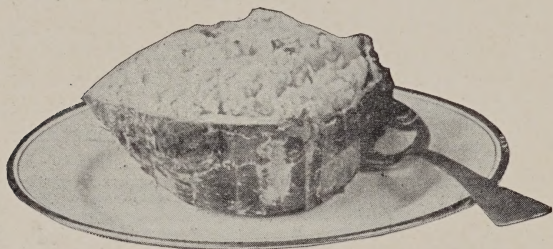
*The production from this field was 296 bushels of corms and tubers per acre.*

#### PREPARATION OF DASHEENS FOR THE TABLE.

Dasheens are commonly baked or boiled in the skin, after simply scrubbing them lightly. Uncooked dasheens contain minute crystals of calcium oxalate, which are more or less irritating to the



skin of most persons. It is advisable, therefore, not to taste raw dasheens and, as a preventive measure when scraping them, to keep the hands wet with water containing a level teaspoonful of sodium carbonate (washing soda) to the quart. It is not generally necessary to use soda in ordinary paring.



HALF OF A DASHEEN CORM, STUFFED.

*An attractive method of serving this delicious vegetable.*

**BAKED DASHEENS.**—In baking dasheens a moderate oven is required,—about the same as for potatoes. The time needed for cooking dasheens is usually a little less than that for potatoes of the same size; those weighing more than a pound may be cut in half from top to base before baking. The dasheens may be (1) baked in the skin, or (2) scraped, though it is generally better to bake in the skin.

1. For baking in the skin, clean the dry dasheens, by pulling off the loose fiber or by rubbing it off with a brush or cloth. Corms and large tubers should be parboiled; place in nearly boiling water, and boil for 10 to 20 minutes. As parboiling reduces the time required for baking, there need be no waste through the forming of a hard crust. When done, **SERVE IMMEDIATELY.** Season with salt and plenty of butter; add pepper if desired. Gravy may be used in place of butter.

Baked corms may be served in the "half-shell"; place a piece of butter in a hole in the center of the cut surface. Small half corms may be served as individual portions.

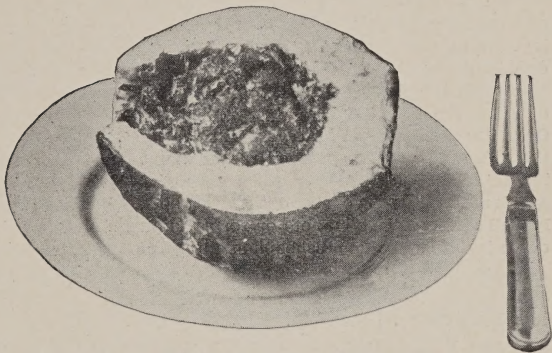
2. Scraped dasheens may be cooked in one of three ways: (1) roasted with meat; (2) rubbed with fat and baked; (3) immersed in nearly boiling water long enough to heat through, and baked. With the last two methods a particularly delicious

soft crust is formed, provided the dasheens have not been baked either too quickly or too long. Serve immediately.

**BOILED DASHEENS.**—Either large dasheens (corms) or small ones (tubers) may be used for boiling. The water may be salted. The dasheens should be boiled in the skins, and may be served thus or with the skins removed. They need not be cooked quite so long as potatoes of the same size; it is well to test with a fork or knitting needle.

The small tubers are especially good if, immediately after being boiled and peeled, they are placed in the oven just long enough to melt a dressing of butter over them.

**RICED DASHEENS.**—Boil the dasheens in their skins. Remove the skin immediately and with a strong, wrought-iron-handled, plunger-type ricer, rice the dasheens into a heated dish. Seasoning, such as salt and butter, may be stirred into the riced dasheen, or, may be added to successive layers without stirring. Milk or cream may be beaten in if desired, but prepared in this way the dasheen will not be so light.



HALF OF A MEAT-FILLED DASHEEN CORM.

*A unique and appetizing dish. The corm is hollowed out, parboiled, stuffed with cooked meat, and then baked. It is cut into two or more parts when served.*

**MEAT-FILLED DASHEEN CORMS.**—Corms, three inches in diameter and upward, are used for this purpose. Clean the corm thoroughly, by scraping or with a stiff brush. Cut the base off squarely so the corm will stand upright. With the aid of a paring knife and an apple corer cut a cylindrical hole, at least  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter, from the top to within three-quarters of an inch of the bottom; save the top of this core

to plug the top of the cavity. Hollow out the interior of the corm to make additional space for the filling, leaving the walls at least one-half inch thick. Parboil for 10 minutes in well-salted water. Fill with cooked chopped meat, well seasoned and with plenty of fat, and replace the plug. Bake in a moderately slow oven until done. Do not overbake. Serve immediately.

**STUFFED DASHEENS.**—Proceed the same as in baking, and then follow the method used for stuffed potatoes, using more butter, however. Corms large enough for serving in halves are usually cut from top to base. If, after baking, the upper part of the corm remains hard, this part should be taken out and discarded.

**SCALLOPED DASHEENS.**—Pare and slice raw dasheens, putting the slices in layers into a buttered baking dish, and seasoning each layer with butter, salt, etc. A few thin slices of onion added brings out the dasheen flavor. Latticework slices of dasheen, made with a fluted slicer, are a little more attractive in appearance than the plain ones, and they do not mat together. Nearly cover with rich milk, and bake. Scalloped dasheens require only about two-thirds as much time in cooking as scalloped potatoes. When corms are used for scalloping, it is well to discard about three-quarters of an inch of the upper, or bud end, as it may be tough after cooking. On account of the firm texture of the dasheen, a slicer with the sliding guard made of wood, rather than of tin, is desirable if a fluted slicer is used.

This method of serving the dasheen will be found particularly well adapted for banquets or formal dinners; and in such cases individual baking dishes should be used if practicable.

**DASHEENS AU GRATIN.**—Proceed as for scalloped dasheens, but use less butter and add grated cheese. Add bread crumbs to the top layer.

**FRIED DASHEENS.**—Slice boiled dasheens, either warm or cold, season with salt, and fry quickly. Use more fat than in frying potatoes, but do not fry as long, for the dasheens are likely to become dry and hard. French fried dasheens are also exceedingly good if not over-fried.

**SARATOGA DASHEEN CHIPS.**—Saratoga dasheen chips are made in the same way as potato chips. Pare raw dasheens and if wet dry them. Slice evenly about one-sixteenth inch thick and soak in plenty of water for from one to two hours; change the water once. Dry the slices between cloths, then fry in deep fat to a straw color. Place the chips on clean paper so that the excess fat may be drawn from them. Salt



immediately when taken from the hot fat. The chips will keep for some time without becoming rancid if fried in a good vegetable fat or oil.



#### SARATOGA DASHEEN CHIPS.

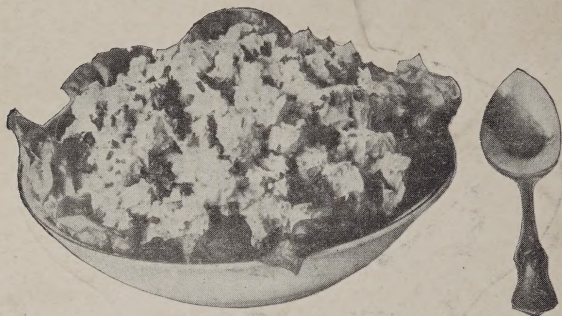
*One of the most delicious of dasheen dishes. The chips are prepared like potato chips, but they take up much less fat.*

**DASHEEN CRISPS.**—Dasheen crisps are especially recommended. They are made by cutting pared raw dasheens into latticework slices, as for scalloped dasheens, or into fluted slices, and frying slowly to a straw color in deep fat. Drain on clean paper, and salt immediately. (Somewhat better results are secured by soaking the slices for an hour or more and drying them between cloths before frying. The use of vegetable fats or oils is advised.)

**DASHEEN FRITTERS.**—Use 1 cup of grated or finely ground raw dasheen; 1 cup of white flour; 1 tablespoonful of sugar;  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoonful of salt; 2 teaspoonfuls of baking powder;  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of milk. Mix the dasheen and the dry ingredients, and add the milk. Drop heaping teaspoonfuls into deep hot fat and fry to a golden brown. Sprinkle with powdered sugar, and serve immediately; or, serve with maple or sugar sirup. These fritters make one of the most thoroughly delicious of all dasheen dishes.

**DASHEEN SALAD.**—Boil medium-sized or small dasheens in the skin and proceed as for potato salad. The addition of

onion improves the salad. It is very important to prepare the dasheens while still warm and to add the dressing at once.



DASHEEN SALAD, GARNISHED WITH LETTUCE AND MINCED PARSLEY.

*Prepared in the same way as potato salad, this dish will appeal particularly to salad lovers.*

**DASHEENS AS FILLING FOR FOWL AND OTHER MEATS.**—Two cups of boiled dasheens riced, mixed with one cup of bread or cracker crumbs, one egg, two tablespoonfuls of butter, and seasoned to taste with salt, pepper, sage, and onion, make a particularly delicious filling comparable to that made with chestnuts.

For additional recipes, or other information concerning the dasheen, address:

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OFFICE OF FOREIGN SEED AND PLANT INTRODUCTION,  
WASHINGTON.